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Sean Dodd

University of East London, s.dodd@uel.ac.uk

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A CASE STUDY IN SUCCESSFUL PROJECT MANAGEMENT: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Dr Sean Dodd

University of East London, University Way, London E16 2RD

Tel: ++44 (0)208 223 2307. Fax: ++44 (0)208 223 3395.

Email: s.dodd@uel.ac.uk

Mr Visva Sathasivam

Assistant Director Adults Services, Lambeth Council, London

Abstract

This paper focuses on the successful implementation of strategic management at Ealing Council which manages the London Borough of Ealing. In particular, we have researched how this is achieved within the Social Services Department. Various change programme initiatives (projects) have taken place in the Department over the past few years by different leaders with varying levels of success. We will discuss some of these projects, but will focus on one particular project which began in November 2004 in response to a crisis situation within the Department. Recent government policies have emphasised a need for joint working and this is also briefly described. This paper builds develops the literature on strategic management in local authorities and project management.

Key words: strategy, local government, project management

1.0 Introduction

We will discuss and analyse the values and beliefs that make up the culture of Ealing Social Services as an organisation, and how leadership during this period used management influence to make the desired strategic changes - in response to a need for change and, to ensure a high standard of sustainable service delivery. The organisational structure is discussed to evaluate the levels of responsibility and accountability of management and staff. Furthermore, we will analyse and discuss how integration of the key management tasks (Human Resources, Finance and Information Management) contributed to the changes required to the delivery of better services to the residents of Ealing.

We will apply theory to practice in the management of change and discuss the impact of the changing environment within Ealing Council and explore how services of quality and efficiency can be developed. The project began in November 2004 has been the only sustained successful implementation of strategic management in Ealing in recent times.

2.0 London Borough of Ealing

In November 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) awarded various star ratings to all Social Service departments in the country. CSCI described Ealing Social Services as 'Serving some people well but with poor prospects' which led to the award of a zero star rating – 3 being the highest.

CSCI is the regulatory body of the Department of Health and monitors the performance of all Social Services departments. CSCI's assessment is based on information provided by the Social Services departments and is collected via Delivery Improvement Statements (DIS) which include 22 performance indicators related to service developments, budget and other qualitative survey outcomes. CSCI publicise the ratings awarded in December each year, consisting of zero, one, two or three stars. These star ratings are a crucial contribution to local authority's overall performance rating.

Ealing Social Services was initially rated a zero star department - with the Council's overall rating described in the final Report as a 'Weak'. The Department was put under Special Measures and closely monitored by CSCI through monthly performance monitoring meetings. Due to bad publicity and political pressure, the Chief Executive resigned in February 2005, followed by a string of (short term) Executive Directors.

In the spring of 2003, the Chief Executive and Corporate Board launched a major change programme called 'Making a World of Difference'. The purpose of this project was to change the way the Council responded to its customers (residents of Ealing) and maximise the use of I.T. to support service delivery. The purpose of the

project included changing the roles of Executive Directors. Harvard Business School Press (2005) argues that bringing about change in any organisation is difficult. Even at the Executive level, there can be such extreme competition that many at the top are not willing to relinquish their power or cohort level. Brown (1995) argues that in these large organisations some groups who perceive that they have power over decisions, information and other resources – and also perceive that they are likely to have to relinquish their position in part, or entirely, as a result of a change programme - are likely to resist the change. This then triggers excruciating cycles of initiative overload, chaos and employee fatigue. This was the case with this project: Ealing Council's 'Making a World of Difference' programme.

Hannaway *et al* (1999) argue that change programmes like this and implemented in isolation without effective communication with key stakeholders will result in another failed project. Some of the key Corporate Board members at Ealing were openly against the project. Brown (1995) and Dyer (1986) found that it is the organisational leaders *per se* who offer most resistance to change. They argue the reason for this is that the leaders have enjoyed success in the past and now believe they know best. As such, they view new change programmes - by default - as disruptive and harmful to their position. In deed, these people are often convinced in their beliefs. Hannah *et al* (1999) found some leaders give up the fight entirely and simply leave the organisation. Some of the Executive Directors resigned from Ealing Council, including the Executive Director for Social Services. Despite the resignations of senior directors, the Chief Executives of the Council still continued with the implementation of the controversial project.

Effective leadership is vital to the success of all large scale projects and the absence of top leadership support is often a key factor for project failure (Brown 1995, Allen and Krait 1987). The Chief Executive did not have the support of her members and they gradually disassociated themselves from the project. The Chief Executive faced strong resistance and did not have support for her vision, and according to Handy (1995), a leader with no followers is a voice in the wilderness.

Kane (2005) argues leadership is the most critical ingredient in any change effort and many employees do not consider their top executives to be effective. This was the

perception held by employees of Ealing Council. A new Chief Executive was appointed in June 2005 and, with the support of the Council members, abandoned the failing project. This followed a study by Pricewater Coopers Limited which concluded the project was neither cost effective nor sustainable. Social Services was still under special measures and was being monitored by CSCI on a monthly basis. The new leadership was expected to show progress within a short space of time. CSCI identified key areas for improvement and various new projects were necessary to achieve the desired improvements.

3.0 Context for Change

It is important to briefly describe the history of Ealing Social Services from 1998. This will provide insight into the culture until 2004 when a new senior management team took over and implemented a new project which was later viewed as a success.

In 1998, the CSCI condemned the Children's Social Services in its Report as a significant failure. As a consequence, the Director of Social Services was asked to resign and a few lower-level managers were dismissed. Due to the mismanagement of Children's Services, the failures appeared in the media and became frontline news for several days. The Director who was asked to resign was popular with his staff and they felt that he was made a scape-goat by the Corporate Board and elected members. The staff thought that the Assistant Director should have been asked to resign instead, as she had been directly responsible. The staff felt the Deputy Director had been saved as she had close links to the Corporate Board. The director who resigned is still remembered as 'The most personable director of all time'.

In December 1998, a new Director of Social Services was appointed. He was 'a people person' and came with a high reputation. As Balogun *et al* (2004) argue, the style of change is about how the process of change is managed, i.e. managing change through education and delegation, collaboration, participation, direction and coercion. The new Director's style was coercive and senior and middle management both respected him and expected significant improvements within a short period.

The changes made by the new Director were imposed on the Department. Some staff felt it was the best way of achieving the rapid changes that Ealing Council was in desperate need of to get out of the media spotlight quickly. Balogun *et al* (2004) argue this style of management may lead to greater resistance, and is unlikely to work unless there is a very real crisis felt within the organisation. In fact, Ealing Council's frontline staff and senior management felt the effects of the crisis and were crying out for change. The new Director was a good communicator and good in public relations – although described as authoritarian and autocratic by senior and middle management alike (White, 1995). He was unpopular with some senior staff as he had dismissed a few managers due to their poor performance. He was, however, seen by frontline staff as having a democratic and participative style and they welcomed this approach.

The Director used senior management in Human Resources (HR) to play a crucial role in managing key stakeholders within the organisational culture to facilitate the change programme, and leading ultimately to project success. For example, HR organised parties to celebrate smaller successes achieved (Brown, 1995). The Director introduced a 'Customer First' logo and required all staff to answer their telephones within three rings. All staff was prohibited from using answer-phones. In addition, an award system was put in place to reward staff members who did not take any sick leave over a twelve month period.

With the departure of many Executive Directors between 2003 and 2004, staff morale plummeted. During this period the Department had been led by three separate Directors. The staff felt they had been let down by both the Chief Executive and the Corporate Board and, regarded the Chief Executive as a dictator who imposed change without their consultation. In November 2004, when the Department was awarded zero stars – thereby rated as one of the worst Social Service Departments in the country - staff morale remained low and turnover was very high. The staff had lost confidence in senior management – in deed, many frontline staff and middle management had left the department even prior to the zero star rating being awarded.

4.0 Influencing Factors Creating the Need for Change

CSCI put special measures on Ealing and consequently, monthly meetings were arranged with senior management to monitor their progress. If the Council had continued to perform badly CSCI would have taken over the management of the Department. As a consequence of the rating, a full Inspection of the Department was arranged for May 2005.

The Corporate Board at the Council turned their attention to achieving major improvement within Social Services. The existing project called, 'Making a World of Difference – Response,' was suspended indefinitely. Stakeholders now expected the Corporate Board to initiate and successfully implement a new change programme.

Schein (1985) argues a problem or crisis is what initiates most programmes of change. Dyer, (1986) argues that a crisis often leads to a lack of support for the old culture - i.e. resulting in less resistance to any new initiatives, and a new leader or leadership team is vital if a new change programme is to be a success. The organisational climate was right for the new Director to initiate and lead strategic change, implemented through a new project.

5.0 Change Management and Leadership

The new Director arrived with a high reputation as prior to this appointment he had led the Social Services Department in Croydon, which had received a 3 star rating in the 2003/2004 period. When he started in Ealing in November 2004, management and staff were uncertain, however, as to how long he would last due to the history of senior management – i.e. a string of short appointments. Ealing was in a critical need of stable leadership with a clear vision to implement a coherent and workable strategy (Lundberg, 1985). Within a week, the new Director had called a meeting to understand the current situation and to create a vision for his new project. All senior managers were invited, and they listened to the key areas for improvement as described in the CSCI Report.

Kane (2005) argues managing change is a people issue: it is about motivation and influencing behaviour, about breaking old habits and attitudes, and about creating an

environment that is conducive to embracing any new strategy. This is what the new Director was trying to achieve at the first meeting. He motivated senior management by stating, for example, he was confident Ealing could make significant improvements within the first six months. He made it clear he would support the managers in implementing the project with the provision of necessary resources. Kane (2005) argues the critical ingredient of any successful implementation of strategy via projects is leadership. Surveys show, however, that most employees do not consider their Executives to be effective at implementing strategic change. In the meeting, the new Director convinced those present that he was able to bring about the major change needed via successful project delivery - ready for the next CSCI Inspection in May 2005.

The Director was a good communicator and as such used effective communication as a key tool to drive the project forward. He made it clear that short term goals should also be sought. It was agreed the key priority for the first six months was to achieve significant improvements in all under-performing areas identified in the CSCI Report – the corollary being success in the forthcoming Inspection. Kotter (1996) argues that as projects aiming to deliver strategic change can take years for the desired outcomes to be realised, short term results can still produce results that are superior to the old (poor) ways of conducting business. This helps overcome the initial fear and uncertainty that are frequently associated with strategic change.

Kotter's (1996) model of change identifies most short term plans as consisting of 6 to 8 stages. It was agreed at that first meeting that all Service Heads would produce a draft Performance Improvement Plan based on the following six stages. These include key priorities and performance indicators which the Heads would be personally responsible to lead, and achieve. These plans were monitored on a monthly basis. A guiding coalition of senior managers to oversee the long and complex effort was therefore set up, and immediately created a clear and compelling vision that consisted of:

- Communication and accountability by all

- A restructuring of the organisation to enable delivery of the project (improvement plan)
- Alignment of the training and performance appraisal systems with the new vision
- A strengthening of the management information system to collect and produce accurate reports
- Clear communication
- Immediate remedial action to resistance to change

The Director created various forums to discuss and lead the changes, for example, weekly meetings attended by all Heads of Services – which he chaired. The Service Managers also held fortnightly meetings in each service area, such as Mental Health, Older People and Disabilities. These meetings were chaired by their respective Head of Services. Team managers also held fortnightly meetings with their team members and frontline staff. These meetings encouraged the free and easy distribution of information throughout Ealing Council at all levels.

Mullins (2005) argues that leadership is increasingly associated not with command and control but, with concepts of inspiration, of getting along with other people and creating a vision with which others can identify. The Director was able to inspire and motivate people by his behaviour and optimism. His leadership style could be described as a mixture of authoritarian and democratic. He alone exercised decision-making and determined policy and procedures. In other areas he was seen more as democratic. He gave autonomy to managers and worked with them in some decision-making. As the Department was in crisis, all Service Managers accepted his leadership style - in deed, they welcomed his style. Rajan (2002) supports his management approach by arguing that autocratic styles are necessary when organisations are in deep trouble and need to achieve a rapid turnaround. The Director exercised a transformational leadership style. He was charismatic and, Mullins (2005) argues that many writers claim this is the same as visionary or inspirational leadership. Burns (2004) states that charismatic leaders transform followers by creating changes in their goals, values, needs, beliefs and aspirations.

The Director was a hands-on person and visited all the service teams in person. He organised a monthly Director's Lunchtime Forum and invited all managers and staff to attend. 'Hands-on' is one of the eight basic attributes of excellence identified by Peters & Waterman (1982). McKinsey's 7S's were all reviewed by senior management: Strategy, Structure, Systems, Staff, Style, Shared values and Skills (Peters & Waterman, 1982). The Director used the meetings to encourage acceptance of the failings of the existing system and of the need for change. According to Hannaway *et al* (1999) there are four steps needed to manage this change:

- Acknowledge the failure of the current system – encourage a need for change
- Create a vision and explore how things could be better
- Prepare a project plan, setting out practical steps to introduce change
- Consolidate change and develop new ways of working – with procedures to prevent a return to the old ways

Development of the project to enable the successful implementation of this new strategy began just after the zero star rating. Lewin (1952) argues the evidence of organisational failure induces a sense of personal failure which then encourages individuals to be more receptive to change programmes. Managers and frontline staff had to develop a real need for change if they were to improve. In this case, there was no major resistance as the managers and staff wanted a successful strategy to be implemented to enable the necessary improvements to be tangibly realised. According to Lewin (1952) and Schein (1964), when the changing state has been successfully negotiated, employees will actively seek change without much encouragement, as described above.

6.0 The CSCI Inspection, 2005

The Inspection took place from 13 to 24 June, 2005. The standards used by the Inspectors to measure performance were:

1. National priorities of strategic objectives
2. Effectiveness of service delivery and outcomes

3. Quality of service for users and carers in Ealing
4. Fair access
5. Management of resources

A statement describing the (new) state of the Social Services Department was prepared, after measuring current performance against the standards. The statement was then sent to the Inspectors prior to the Inspection.

This was a high profile Inspection as the outcome would be used to determine a new star rating. Consequently, all the Executive Directors, the Chief Executive and elected politicians worked closely with the new Director to ensure project success. The Inspection included interviews with staff and management to identify:

- How the Department collaborated with other agencies to provide services
- What strategic partnerships were in place
- How the Department established and sustained strategic partnerships

Interviews were also conducted with frontline staff and middle managers to assess their morale and to ascertain how much they supported the Director's vision. Chief Executives, elected members, Directors and senior managers were also interviewed by the Inspectors.

Implementation of a new strategy is a major project which requires a great deal of planning. As a result, meetings were held fortnightly from January 2005 until the Inspection in June. Group members included Service Heads and often the Director. These meetings were necessary as poor planning - or even no planning – can lead to confusion, a lack of common understanding, higher costs, stress, discontentment, missed deadlines, duplication of effort and eventual rework – resulting in a failed project (Webster, 1999).

Briefing notes were prepared with regard to the Inspection and the position against the standards. These were communicated to all staff. Briefing notes were also prepared for partner organisations and the voluntary sector. Many workshops were held to

communicate the new strategy, and progress achieved to date, to obtain the necessary commitment from frontline staff.

The Inspection went ahead as planned and the results were published in August 2005. The Inspection was successful. The Report concluded by stating the Department, 'Served some people well and had promising prospects'. The Report found:

- A strong and competent senior management team in place
- Wide awareness of the overall strategy and changing culture
- High staff morale with good determination and commitment from all staff
- A changing culture was demonstrated by operational activity
- Improved staff recruitment and retention
- Significant improvements in financial management

A summary of the conclusion from the Report is provided below:

- Many improvements achieved over a very short time period
- An accelerated pace of change
- The Department responded positively and with determination to address the areas identified previously as under-performing
- Services were moving in sound strategic direction

The Inspection clearly found evidence of a successful project charged with the implementation of a new, and necessary, corporate strategy.

7. Making Significant Improvements in Key Performance Indicators

During 2003/2004, Ealing Council did not have stable leadership or performance management in place. Underperformance indicators showed the Council was not providing a high standard of service delivery. For example, the Information Management System was ineffective and not showing an accurate picture (Managing Information Book 3). Now there is a team called the Performance Management Team

whose main function is the transformation of data input by frontline staff into meaningful information for use by senior management.

Team managers discussed performance and believed there had been significant improvement, for example, in the reduction of waiting times for new applications for assistance - since January 2003. In practice then, it appeared that Ealing had been performing better than the official figures suggested. The 2003/2004 figures on assessment waiting times showed that Ealing had only completed 27% of assessments within the CSCI defined time scale of 48 hours or less of receiving a referral.

A workshop was organised to conduct a mapping exercise to examine the process of data input, with regard to the assessment waiting time Performance Indicator. The workshop was attended by all the team managers. Discrepancies between the computer system's (SSIMBA) reported figures were explored and the experiences of the managers *per se*. Social workers were expected to input the data on SSIMBA as they progress their individual cases. The culture in Ealing at that time included a feeling by the staff that the collection of information for senior management was of little relevance to them (Social Workers) and they often considered this task as just another unwelcome chore. The staff was of the opinion that data input prevented them from more direct contact with service users/residents. It was clear that a performance management culture was not established at that juncture, or communicated with frontline staff or managers - as argued would happen by Kerslake & Moultrle (1998).

Team managers provided evidence that showed service users were contacted within 48 hours of a referral being made in 80-90% of cases. If the view is taken that the assessment process starts on the day that a client first receives contact from a Social Worker, then 80-90% of assessments commencing within 48 hours should be achieved - as required by the Performance Indicators. It became evident that frontline staff had input incorrect dates in the date fields, as SSIMBA entry fields were open to interpretation, and the staff felt an obligation to enter data - resulting in an inaccurate picture being created - in deed, the performance reported was low in 2003/2004. As agreed at a workshop, a protocol was produced, i.e. definition, as to when an assessment starts and completes – thus providing further evidence that ambiguity and inconsistent definitions contribute to project failure. A checklist was also produced for

managers which clarified the definition of Performance Indicators, and described some tasks and tips on how to meet their requirements. To introduce and establish a performance management culture, monthly meetings were arranged to review Performance Reports produced by the Performance Team. These meetings encouraged an understanding of the importance of accurate data input, and established a performance management culture in the day-to-day work of both frontline staff and management.

Another of the under-performing key indicators in 2003/2004 was Older People from Black, Ethnic and Minority (BME) groups receiving assessments. In support of the new Ealing strategy on partnership work with all stakeholders, the new Director set up - and chaired - a meeting with local BME organisations and other voluntary organisations. In that meeting it became clear that community knowledge of available services at Ealing Council was low, as found by Aziz *et al* back in 1992.

Both Polish and Somalian populations in Ealing were growing and yet Ealing Council still had to communicate with these communities. There was both a lack of trust and expectation in these populations - different to the wider Older People population. Consequently, a series of projects were set up called, 'Reaching Out to our Communities'. This involved social worker visits to Somalians and other Community Centres on a monthly basis to take referrals and offer advice. This initiative was welcomed by the groups and they informed the CSCI Inspectors that they had noticed a culture change in the Social Services Department. They stated it had become more open and inclusive and the changed culture actively encouraged new partnerships.

It was noted that since January 2005 significant improvements were made on most of the Performance Indicators. The CSCI Inspectors noted in their Report (June 2005) that, 'Clear evidence was found of a changing culture and this was demonstrated by operational activity and, staff understood and supported the relevance of Performance Indicators. Furthermore, the Inspectors said that Performance Indicators had either been met or in deed, exceeded.

8.0 Making Significant Improvements in Budget Management

In November 2004 further criticism had been raised over financial management. Senior management were unaware of either 1) how much they had overspent or 2) of the extant trend of over-spending. The Social Services Management Team was not kept up to date and neither did they analyse the rising demand for services – i.e. they did not make any provision for the consistent referral increase. The Financial Team and Social Services Department were not working collaboratively and had no means of effective communication. Frontline managers were also not involved with the budget setting process. Yet participation in the budget setting process improves the attitude of middle managers toward the control process. The acceptance of a budget and its target by budget holders is crucial to the success or failure of a budgeting system (Dew and Gee, 1973). Henley *et al* (1983) argue that budgetary control usually lies with service directors, but accountable management often delegates the responsibility to those nearest to the actual provision of the service. At Ealing Council, the service budget had been delegated to team managers and service managers.

Frontline managers were aware of the consistent increase in referrals but were not included in the process of budget setting. Clearly an increase in the provision of more and better services without a corresponding increase in resources is not realistic (Henley *et al*, 1983). According to team managers, the Financial Department was not providing adequate information which would have helped them to manage their budgets. This is supported by Davis (1997), who found that management requires detailed information to facilitate effective decision making and control.

Ealing had a history of over-spending and this had become part of the culture. The new Director met with the Director of Finance to investigate a very necessary change programme. The following points were agreed and implemented within a month – in February 2005:

- Compel the planning and co-ordination of activities of the various divisions
- Invite managers and budget holders to the budget setting meetings
- Communicate budget plans to managers
- Motivate managers to be open towards the agreed organisational objectives

- Establish credible financial arrangements to control activities
- Create monthly budget clinics where respective accountants and budget holders can meet to evaluate performance

By May 2005, a significant improvement was achieved in the financial management at Ealing Council. CSCI Inspectors noted in their report that effective budget control systems were in place.

9.0 The Role of Human Resources

The Human Resources (HR) management team played a key role in implementing the new strategy in Ealing Council. Brown (1995) argues that HR professionals should be asked to play a crucial role in managing key elements of organisational culture. He further argues that HR can influence organisational culture change through, for example, codes of practice and procedures. Beliefs and values may be shaped and conditioned by mission statements. HR may additionally facilitate change by initiating a change programme, performance appraisal process and/or a new induction programme for newly recruited staff.

Just prior to the 2004 zero star rating, a workplace mentor coach was appointed to run induction programmes for newly recruited staff. These induction programmes were designed to reinforce both the change programme and new strategy. The new Director took part by giving talks on various issues. The coach was attached to the HR Department and developed a strategy to strengthen both recruitment and retention of staff. Many policies and procedures were created or updated for staff to understand the new strategy.

Brown (1995) argues that the results of a change programme to improve any organisational culture - using HR as the facilitator - may be difficult to determine. One approach found to be effective in managing cultural change is called the 'Consistent Cues Approach'. This approach requires all aspects of every HR programme to unequivocally promote the attributes of the desired culture. The reasoning behind this is that by constantly promoting certain norms, values and

beliefs, other cognitive and behavioural characteristics and anomalies which the organisation defines as 'deviant' will be removed. At Ealing Council, the staff had to be persuaded to believe in themselves, to develop a 'can do' attitude and to be motivated to be successful through specially designed training programmes.

HR further organised various meetings and social events for frontline staff to inform them of the new strategy. These events are still hosted - to help sustain the organisational culture to achieve, celebrate, and succeed. Brown (1995) argues this variety of socialisation mechanisms represent a further tool to facilitate the implementation of a new strategy.

10. Impact of Change

Prior to November 2004, Ealing had been criticised by CSCI as being one of the worst Councils in the UK for service provision to its residents. The poor performance not only affected the trust of the residents in Ealing but, also the morale of the workforce.

The outcome of the Inspection in June 2005 was very positive. The Inspection found an accelerated pace of change, and this enabled a better outcome for service users. The successful project charged with delivering organisational change enabled a positive response with determination to address poor performance and make significant improvements. Above all, service users felt that they were receiving a quality service provision that was both responsive and effective.

In November 2005, Ealing was awarded one star - based on the outcome of the Inspection in June 2005. Out of a total of 22 Performance Indicators, 11 exceeded their targets. According to the CSCI assessment, staff and managers were fully involved and committed to the new changes and, a positive changing culture was noted. Staff morale was now very good and the staff was very determined and committed to sustain the improvements achieved to date.

The Department of Social Services at Ealing Council continues to make significant improvements in Performance Indicators and achieve real improvements in service

delivery that make a difference to the local residents. A report for the period 2005/2006 was sent to CSCI in June 2006, which led to the award of two stars in November 2006 when CSCI announced the new star ratings for Departments across the UK. In November 2007 the Department achieved the highest level possible of three stars, and this was awarded again in November 2008 following the annual Inspection earlier in the year. .

11.0 Conclusion

The focus of this paper is a successful project created to deliver a necessary change programme to implement a new strategic vision at Ealing Council that began in November 2004 - and continues to this day. Various change initiatives have been described that took place in recent times, including those which took place prior to 2004 and the reasons for their failure.

We have critically analysed the complexity of ideas, values and beliefs that make up the culture at Ealing Council and, how the culture has changed. This change has led to improved performance, resulting in a better outcome for service users.

Ealing Council's organisational and cultural structures have been discussed with regard to the role of leadership and style necessary to lead a successful change programme to implement strategy. We have discussed the leadership style of the new Director and his involvement in the implementation process.

Implementing a new strategic vision at Ealing Council was difficult and complex. It was not sufficient that each frontline employee, management or senior management had a vision for change. Organisational change must be shared. Strategies, structures and cultures must be created, maintained and managed to achieve the objectives of change. Individual variations and inputs are still important, but must be managed within the context of achieving a shared team vision for change.

In November 2006 Ealing was awarded 2 stars (3 is the maximum). The Director of Adults Services (DAS) left in February 2007 and a new Director of Adults Services

was appointed. The new Director of Adults Services was previously employed as Head of Integrated Commissioning who had worked at Ealing for some time. He had a proven record of leadership and innovation. He had created a successful Integrated Commissioning team whilst in charge – the team was viewed as one of the best in the UK.

Strong corporate leadership should be provided by the Executive Director for Children and Adults who was brought in during 2005 when Ealing was in crisis. The new Director benefited Ealing Council by ensuring this strong and stable leadership was provided. The need for strong and effective leadership within Adults Services is driven by a commitment for continuous improvement. Front-line staff and managers were highly motivated, energetic and felt explicitly valued by the Council. Ealing was awarded the highest banding of three stars in November 2007 and proudly became, 'The fastest improved Adults Services department' in the country.

Ealing continues to make very significant progress across all service areas. The speed and trajectory of change and improvement are still very well maintained. Ealing has very ambitious plans to provide excellent services to vulnerable people in order to become one of the best Adults Services Departments in the UK.

As a result of the progress already made, there is a determination for continuous improvement in performance and to modernise services to enable better outcomes for the residents of Ealing. All key Performance Indicators continue to make significant progress. Staff morale is high. This continues to rise in conjunction with staff displaying high levels of commitment, imagination and enthusiasm.

There was a further Inspection (Independence, Well-Being and Choice) in February 2008 with a Report published in May 2008. The Report rated Ealing as 'Good' on all three themes of the inspection, viz: Safeguarding Adults, Personalised Services and Equal Access. Ealing was awarded 'Excellent' for Capacity to Improve. In the winter of 2008, Ealing achieved the second highest score nationally and the highest score in the south east out of 25 Inspections using this type of inspection method.

The inspection report described strong and effective leadership within Adults Social Services that was driven by the commitment to continuing to improve services. Good year-on-year progress has been achieved. The Report found staff viewed senior management as visible, supportive and fostering an 'open door' approach. Staff were highly motivated, energetic and continue to feel valued by the Council.

A successful project began in 2004 which resulted in Ealing progressing from 0 stars to 3 stars in 2007. In November 2008, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) announced Ealing had retained their 3 star rating. This shows the change programme not only made improvements but they have been sustained in conjunction with continuous improvement. Ealing is determined to continue to modernise its services to provide better quality services to its residents. In addition, recent government policies have emphasised the need for Health and Social Care integration and to support this, one care management team moved in October 2009 to a building to be shared with a district nursing team. The date of their arrival was unknown at the time of publication but is planned to take place at the earliest opportunity.

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